



McGregor W. Scott
United States Attorney
Eastern District of California

Sacramento
501 I. Street, Ste 10-100
Sacramento CA 95814
Tel (916) 554-2700
TTY (916) 554-2855

NEWS RELEASE

Fresno
2500 Tulare St., Suite 4401
Fresno, CA 93721
Tel (559) 497-4000
TTY (559) 497-4500

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 20, 2007

Contact: Rosemary Shaul (916) 554-2802

<http://www.usdoj.gov/usao/cae>

DEBIT CARD SKIMMER PLEADS GUILTY

SACRAMENTO--United States Attorney McGregor W. Scott announced today that FARRELL MAHARAJ, 23, of Sacramento pleaded guilty before United States District Judge Lawrence K. Karlton to one count of access device fraud.

This case is the product of an extensive investigation by the United States Secret Service.

According to Assistant United States Attorney Matthew D. Segal, who is prosecuting the case, the defendant worked at a Rancho Cordova gas station that bank investigators had suspected was a place where customers' debit card numbers were being captured for subsequent unauthorized use. On July 13, 2006, United States Secret Service agents went to the gas station at a time that the defendant was operating the cash register and made purchases using debit cards. They saw the defendant swipe their cards first through the cash register and then surreptitiously through his left hand. They also saw the defendant watch them input their card PIN numbers and then enter numbers on his cellular telephone. The defendant was searched and arrested. He had in his possession a small card reader with 179 debit card numbers recorded on it.

The defendant is scheduled to be sentenced by Judge Karlton on July 3, 2007, at 9:30 a.m.

The maximum statutory penalty for a violation of possession of fifteen or more unauthorized access devices is ten years imprisonment. However, the actual sentence will be dictated by the Federal Sentencing Guidelines, which take into account a number of factors, and will be imposed at the discretion of the court. Because the defendant is not a citizen of the United States, he may also be deported as a consequence of his conviction.

###